

When a reporter calls...

Don't feel pressured to give an immediate answer to any question. Reporters expect professionals like you to be busy, so it's OK to get answers to reporters through follow-up calls. This gives everyone time to prepare a clear and concise response. Be polite, but don't be pushed. Here's how...

1. Get the reporter's name, organization, and telephone number:

"Can you please tell me your name and who you work for?" (it's OK to ask for the correct spelling)

"And, what is your telephone number?"

2. End the call:

"Thanks for your call, someone from our communications office will get back to you."
(reporters are accustomed to this response)

3. Contact NIEHS Office of Communications and Public Liaison (OCPL):

Christine Bruske (Director, OCPL) 541-3665

Robin Mackar at 541-0073

John Peterson at 541-7860

4. OCPL staff will contact the reporter, identify what information is being requested, and will prepare a list of questions the reporter intends to ask.

5. OCPL staff will work with NIEHS staff (which may be you and others) to formulate a response to each inquiry.

The communications staff is here to help NIEHS leaders, researchers and program administrators formulate a clear, concise response to questions from news reporters.

6. OCPL staff will obtain the necessary NIH/DHHS clearances for responding to each inquiry.

7. OCPL staff will contact the appropriate NIEHS staff and/or researcher (which may be you) and will schedule a return call to the reporter:

The communications staff can work with you to prepare you for your interview. Sometimes, OCPL staff will answer questions from reporters.

8. OCPL staff will search for the resulting news story and will provide it to everyone involved in responding to the reporter's call.